

資料

Irish Worker (1911-14) より

亀山 幸枝

はじめに

Irish Worker は、アイルランドの労働運動家 James Larkin によって、1911 年 5 月から 1914 年 12 月にかけて発行された新聞である。この新聞の特徴を、ラーキンの伝記の著者 Emmet O'Connor は、'a mixture of news and views of working-class interest in short, punchy articles, laced with humour, poetry, songs, sport, and the visual appeal of photographs and cartoons' と述べている¹⁾。また、発行された 189 号すべてをつぶさに調査し、詳細な索引を作成した Robert G. Lowery は、同時期に発行されていた他の新聞や雑誌と違って、*Irish Worker* にはジェイムズ・ジョイスやジェイムズ・ステューブンスの小説、イエイツやパトリック・ピアースや Æ (ジョージ・ウィリアム・ラッセル) の詩といった、当代を代表する文学者の作品が掲載されていない点を挙げ、記事のほとんどは文学的な価値というより歴史的な意味で重要なのだと言いながらも、それらは 'living documents of Ireland's exploited working class whose rage, sorrow, wit, humor and pathos were the material from which movements were fashioned and from which leaders like Larkin and Connolly and writers like O'Casey emerged' であると評価し、それだけで十分にこの新聞を研究する価値があると結論づけている²⁾。*Irish Worker* の 1912 年クリスマス号を編集して出版した James Curry は、逆に *Irish Worker* の文学的側面に注目して、次のように述べている—— 'Yet the fact remains that short stories, plays, songs and poetry were an important part of the paper's character, a facet that has never adequately received the recognition it deserves'³⁾。

以下に、アイルランド国立図書館に所蔵されているこの新聞から、いくつかの記事を紹介したいと思う。しかしその前に、まず前述の 3 人の研究者および、アイルランドの労働運動の歴史という観点からこの新聞の研究を行なった John Newsinger に依って、*Irish Worker* に関す

本稿は、一般財団法人和歌山大学経済学部後援会からの助成を受けたものである。

1) Emmet O'Connor, *Big Jim Larkin: Hero or Wrecker?* (Dublin, 2015), p. 80.

2) R. G. Lowery, 'Sean O'Casey and the *Irish Worker*', in R. G. Lowery (ed.), *O'Casey Annual No. 3* (London, 1984), p. 46.

3) James Curry, 'Andrew Patrick Wilson and the *Irish Worker*, 1912-13', in David Convey (ed.), *Locked Out: A Century of Irish Working-Class Life* (Dublin, 2013), p. 54.

るいくつかの事実を簡単にまとめておかねばならない。

Irish Worker は1911年5月27日に創刊号が発行され、以後1914年12月5日まで毎土曜日に発行された。各号は、1912年のクリスマス特別号を除き、4ページで構成されており、値段は1ペニーであった。編集長はラーキンで、1913年のダブリン・ロックアウト⁴⁾に際してラーキンが逮捕収監されていた期間、およびラーキンがイングランドやスコットランドに講演旅行に出かけた期間は、1916年のイースター蜂起で中心的な役割を果たすことになる James Connolly が、ラーキンに代わって編集にあたった。

発行部数については、ラーキン自身が1911年10月21日号で述べているところによれば、第1号は5,000部、第2号は8,000部、第3号が15,000部で、10月の時点では20,000部を超えていたという⁵⁾。新聞販売店の多くが取り扱いを拒否したので、流通は新聞配達少年により、配布はほぼダブリンに限られていた。ラーキン自身の言うところでは、配達員は他の新聞より75パーセント多い報酬を得ていた。編集長は無給で、寄稿者もすべて稿料なしのボランティアだった。Loweryによれば、読者の数は発行部数の2倍を超えていただろうという、というのは、ダブリンの労働者たちの間で手から手へと渡されて読まれたと思われるからだ⁶⁾。Newsingerは、アイルランド運輸・一般労働組合(ITGWU)の公式記録の著者C. Desmond Gravesのことは引いて、‘one can safely assume that the newspaper “was read or discussed by the entire working class of the city”’と説明している⁷⁾。また、Pádraig Yeatesは、‘Its unique combination of socialist polemic, hard news, gossip, humour and plain scurrility made it essential reading for anyone who claimed to have an informed opinion of goings-on in the city’とも書いている⁸⁾。

Irish Worker は、当初 Michael Mullen を代表者とする協同組合によって運営された。1912

4) 当時のアイルランド最大の資本家の一人 William Martin Murphy の所有する市街電車会社 Dublin United Tramway Company の従業員のうち、ラーキンの設立したアイルランド運輸・一般労働組合(ITGWU)の組合員が、労働組合の承認を求めてストライキを行なったことが発端になった。ダブリン経営者連盟の長であり、行政府からも支援を受けるマーフィーは、労働組合運動に対して全面戦争を宣言し、400人以上の経営者の支持を集めて、労働組合に加入する従業員をロックアウトした。これによって約25,000人の労働者が仕事を奪われた。この戦争は1913年8月から14年3月まで続いたが、結局労働者側の敗北に終わった。ロックアウト期間中、大規模な暴動、警察によるバトン・チャージ、何百人という組合活動家の投獄、イギリスからのスト破り労働者の導入、逆にイギリスの労働者たちからの多額の寄付や支援ストライキ、また労働者を守るためのアイルランド市民軍の結成があった。

5) ダブリン・ロックアウトの浩瀚な研究を著した Pádraig Yeates によれば、当時の代表的な急進的ナショナリストの週刊新聞 *Sinn Féin* の発行部数は3,000から5,000、リベラルなユニオニストの *Irish Times* は約45,000、アイルランド議会党支持の *Freeman's Journal* は約40,000、ラーキンと敵対する資本家マーフィーの *Irish Independent* と *Evening Herald* はともに約100,000であった (*Lockout: Dublin 1913*, p. 25)。

6) Lowery, p. 35.

7) John Newsinger, ‘A lamp to guide your feet: Jim Larkin, the *Irish Worker*, and the Dublin working class’, *European History Quarterly* 20 (1990), p. 65.

8) Yeates, p. 25.

年3月、ラーキンは Irish Co-operative Labour Press Ltd. を設立し、発行主体は William O'Brien をチェアマンとし、委員会と執行役員を持つ組織となったが、発行方針については、'policy of the paper was to be left entirely in the hands of the Editor, Jim Larkin' と明言されていたので⁹⁾、実質的にはラーキンの新聞であったと言える。資金については、1株5シリングで8,000株を発行する予定だったが、出資者数は目標に達せず、ページ数を増やして紙面を充実させ、発行部数も増やすという計画は実現しなかった¹⁰⁾。しかしながら、紙面の一定の割合がダブリンの商店や小規模企業からの広告に充てられており、広告からの収入と毎号の売り上げで、新聞は黒字だった。広告収入は毎週10～12ポンドあり、純利益はおよそ8ポンド10シリングだったという¹¹⁾。

ラーキン自身は、発行された期間を通して400あまりの記事・論文を書いた。また、ラーキンは編集者として優秀だったというのが Lowery の判断である。彼は労働運動を広げる上で重要な町であるウェックスフォード、ウォーターフォード、スライゴ、リムリック、ベルファスト、コーク、ダンドークなどから記事を送ってくる通信員を確保していた。論説記事の書き手も多数存在したが、おもな寄稿者は、James Connolly, William Patrick Partridge といった労働運動家、ラーキンの妹でアイルランド女性労働組合の設立者 Delia Larkin, 劇作家の Sean O'Casey, 作家でジャーナリストの Standish O'Grady, 劇作家で1914-15年にはアビー座の総支配人を務めた Andrew Patric Wilson (彼は 'Euchan', 'Mac' という筆名でも書いた) などである。'Ireland's Eye', 'Shellback' といった筆名で書く寄稿者もいた。

Irish Worker は、第一次世界大戦に反対する立場を取ったため、1914年12月アイルランド総督府により発行禁止処分を受けた。

I

Our Platform and Principles

by James Larkin

27 May, 1911

To the working class of Ireland the Editor of the Irish Worker makes his bow—not [in]¹²⁾ any humble manner, however, but as one [w]ho desires to speak to you and of you with honour and pride. Too long, ay! for too long, have we, the Irish working people, been humble and inarticulate. Yes, in the words of the old ballad—"Too long have we slumbered; but, now for the future, brave boys, do not fear." The Irish Working Class (capital letters, good Mr.

9) O'Connor, p. 80.

10) *ibid.*, pp. 79-80.

11) Yeates, p. 25.

12) 以下、欠損箇所、不鮮明な箇所、誤植と思われる箇所を [] 書きで表わした。

Printer) are beginning to awaken. They are coming to realise the truth of the old saying, "He who would be free himself must strike the blow."

Agreed! But what do we mean by Freedom? Different individuals, various nations and peoples have their own conception of the [meaning] of the word Freedom. The dictionaries, of course, give the definition of the word, and after reading the dictionary or dictionaries, one has less understanding of the word and its application than before consulting the editorial oracle.

Let us, then, go to the prophets of the various political parties or cliques which we in Ireland are cursed with. Let us see what they mean by Freedom—let us take the latest by-product of the political cauldron—the O'Brienites.

I take it their reading of the word means a country called Ireland managed and controlled by William O'Brien, M.P.; Maurice Healy, M.P.; Dunraven, Lady Arnott, Lord Kenmare, Lord Barrymore, and last, but not least, Clanricarde! A land where the farmer or gombeen man, having, with the money or by pledging the credit of the Irish people, has been enabled to buy from the Kenmares, the Barrymores, and the other parasites—formerly known as the landlords—the land of the Irish people, the people will be allowed by the grace of, and with the permission of, the new landocracy to exist on the soil of Ireland, always keeping in mind, however, this fact: that permission to exist will only be continued so long as the people are willing to work for this new gang of parasites long hours for low wages, and under the most degrading conditions.

The word Freedom to the All-for-William League means a joining of hands with that party of sycophants, privilege-mongers, place-hunters, nation-levellers, blood-suckers, and carrion-crows that go to form the Unionist party in this country. And what do the Ardilauns, Dunravens, Moores, and Campbells mean by Freedom?—that they, the privileged minority, shall continue to monopolize all places of profit and interest; that we, the common Irishry, as they call us, will continue in the future as in the past to allow them and the fell brood who have battered on us and our people for that last 800 years to keep "adoing of it," as the Cockney says. Freedom to exploit! Freedom to degrade—to insult, to ridicule the Nation which feeds and clothes them, and which too long has given them shelter! The day is coming fast when those vampires will find that this right-little-tight-little island is too circumscribed for such creatures, who mean by Freedom liberty to foul the nest in which they were too tenderly reared.

Then what do the remanent known as the Sinn Fein Party mean by Freedom? Now, when I speak of the remanent I mean what is known as the Official Sinn Fein Party, of which Griffith is the prophet. A party or rump, which, while pretending to be Irish of the Irish, insults the Nation by trying to foist on it not only imported economics, based on false principles, but which had the temerity to advocate the introduction of foreign capitalists into this sorely-exploited country. Their chief appeal to the foreign capitalists was that they (the imported capitalists) would have freedom to employ cheap Irish labour! No, friend, Arthur, the Irish capitalist already has too much freedom to exploit the worker! of which more anon.

For eleven years these self-appointed prophets and seers have led their army up the hill and led them down again, and would continue to so lead them, if allowed, until the leader was appointed king of Ireland under the Constitution of 1782. That “Constitution” was a rotten one. The men who formulated it a bad lot, who sold our country for their own material benefit, and whose only regret was that they had not another country to sell. We want neither imported economics nor imported capitalists. We have sufficient capital in the land of Ireland. We, Irish workers, have the mental and physical powers to utilise that capital, and the common-sense section—that is, the working class portion of the Sinn Fein Party, have realized that now, and will, I feel sure, be the backbone of the only party to which the Irish worker should belong—i.e., an Irish Labour Party.

And now, what of the definition given to the word Freedom by the party known as the Nationalist Party? Well, they admit honestly and openly that they do not believe in political Freedom, and they know nothing of economic Freedom! They state logically enough, I admit, that they are a party bound together for one purpose—namely, the accomplishment of a movement to achieve self-government for Ireland; and that, as far as is humanly possible, they are not going to allow Freedom to anybody, either to think or act in shape or form—only as they, the leaders of the Nationalist Party, dictate. They have proved that they are not concerned in the material welfare of the Irish worker by the fact that every Act passed by the British Parliament that in any way minimized the hard conditions of the English worker, or in any way improved his condition, the Nationalist Party has agreed, nay, have insisted on Ireland being deleted from such legislation, always excepting the Old Age Pensions Act, which they dared not interfere with.

We will return to those matters in our next issue and quote Act after Act beneficial to the worker, which this party have deprived them of. Then what of ourselves? We Irish workers, what do we mean by the word Freedom? Does the word Freedom include Liberty. Yes and no! For it is paradoxical but true; that the less liberty a man or individual may exercise the more Freedom he or she may enjoy. But we are not going to play with words. Let us have a common-sense reading of the word.

By Freedom we mean that we Irishmen in Ireland, shall be free to govern this land called Ireland by Irish people in the interest of all the Irish people. That no other people or peoples, no matter what they call themselves, or from whence they come, now or in the future, have any claim to interfere with the common right of the common people of this island of Ireland to work out their own destiny! We owe no allegiance to any other nation, nor the king, governors or representatives of any other nation. That all such persons are interlopers and trespassers on this our land, and that we are determined to accomplish not only National Freedom, but a greater thing—Individual Freedom—Freedom from military and political slavery, such as we suffer under at present, but also from a more degraded slavery, economic or wage slavery! How, then, are we to achieve Freedom and Liberty?

To accomplish political and economic Freedom we must have our own party! There is no

difficulty whatever about that. That party means People—all men and women who are willing to work and build up an Irish Nation! That party must have principles! And, forget not, workers, that principles are greater than persons! It was persons who sold this Nation in the past! Put your trust in no man, you will therefore never be confounded. Stand by your principles *****¹³⁾

Yes, true Freedom is to be in earnest to make others free! Such, then, is the policy of this paper. Such are its principles—broad—based upon the people's will!

Bide your time, the morn is breaking
 Bright with Freedom's blessed ray,
 Millions from their trance awaking,
 Soon shall stand in firm array.
 Man shall fetter man no longer,
 Liberty shall march sublime,
 Every moment makes us stronger,
 Calm and thoughtful, bide your time.

Bide your time, one false step taken
 Perils all you yet have done,
 Undismayed, erect, unshaken,
 Watch and wait and all is won.
 'Tis not by a rash endeavor,
 Man can e'er to greatness climb,
 Would you win your rights for ever?
 Firm, unshrinking, bide your time.

Bide your time, your worst transgression
 Were to strike and strike in vain,
 He whose arm would smite oppression,
 Must not need to strike again.
 Danger makes the brave man steady,
 Rashness is the coward's time,
 Be for freedom's battle ready,
 When it comes, but bide your time.

13) この箇所1行判読不能。

II

The Poor Law Elections

—Labourers Fight in South Dock Ward

27 May, 1911

Readers,—An opportunity is given to you on next Monday, May 29th, between the hours of 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., to do something to remove the indelible disgrace placed upon this great city—a disgrace which has been and is getting quoted throughout the length and breadth of Great Britain, against the case of Ireland's claim to self-government. The disgrace I refer to is that the publicans run this city, govern this city; in fact monopolise all public boards: that everything is made subservient to the interest of the drink seller. If you want an old age pension, apply to Councillor publican. If you want a Dispensary note, again, Poor-Law Guardian publican. If you want a job in the Corporation service, again apply to Councillor or Alderman publican. Let us admit for the sake of argument that the publican element have a right to representation on public boards. There are 300,000 persons or more in Dublin. The drink-shop owners and their assistants comprise something like one in 300, that is to say, about 3,000. What is their representation on the city corporation? Well, those who sell liquor directly, and those interested in the sale of drink, number 47, or more than half of the total Council. And every board election in the city and county would bear out the same proportion.

What of the present Poor Law election? In three wards all of the candidates are publicans. In Wood Quay three of the official candidates are publicans. In Rotunda, four out of five. Merchant's Quay, three elected out of four. But come to South Dock, a purely working-class ward. Out of five candidates no less than four are publicans, nominated by an alleged Branch of the United Irish League, a branch run and subsided by these boyoes. There are over 2,200 voters in the Ward. Seven out of ten are Nationalists, there are not fifty members of this so-called "Branch." Their annual contributions, which, apart from a few shillings subscribed by some honest but misguided workingmen, and whose subscriptions were intended for the National Organisation, not for the use of the clique of place-hunters, sycophants and Ward heelers, who are running the Ward in their own and Bung's interest. I repeat—take away the hush-money subscribed by the Bungs in the Ward, and they would not get enough to pay for the gas they consume.

Well, what of the man who has been selected to fight the combined forces of corruption and bungery? He is secretary of the No. 1 Branch of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union. He has been endorsed by the Trades' Council. He is and has been a Nationalist, a consistent one all his life unlike some of his traducers. Born in the Ward, worked all his life in or about the Ward, married, and reared all his family within the Ward; has known what poverty meant; knows the wants and grievances of the people in the Ward. Always accessible, he has no axe to grind, under the control of the Union which employs him. He has done his best in the past for the poor, and, given the opportunity, will do more. He is standing as a Labour

candidate, and Labour candidate only. Nominated by his own Trade Union and endorsed by the United Trades of Dublin.

Greene is his name.

Greene is your man.

Greene will be a Guardian of the Poor.

Here is Greene, the candidate.—

[A photograph is inserted here.]

A meeting to support the candidature of Greene, and to protest against the gross intimidation of the police at last Sunday's meeting, will be held in Albert Place (off Grand Canal Street), on Sunday, May 28th, 1911, at one o'clock.

The candidate, supported by Jim Larkin and other prominent labour men, will speak.

In connection with the contest in South Dock Poor Law election, the bungs have received a bad blow. They had so fixed things up that, taking advantage of the Local Government regulations, they monopolised the right to appoint personating agents, and Greene, the Labour candidate, would thus have had no representation. The Town Clerk having ruled that Green[e] had no right to appoint anybody, the candidate, accompanied by Jim Larkin, and fortified with advice of a prominent member of the temperance movement in this city—and a City Father to boot—waited on the Local Government Board. Although they were unable to see the secretary or vice-president, they were received by Mr. Leech, and having heard the complaint, put the matter before the Board. Another official of the Board advised Mr. Larkin to write, asking for a dispensation or exemption to be allowed. That advice was taken, and the Board have admitted that exceptional circumstances entered into the case, and granted an order empowering the Town Clerk to allow Mr. Greene to appoint agents. So Bung, my boy, round one to the Transport Union!

III

St. Peter and the Scab

27 May, 1911

St. Peter stood guard at the golden gate,
 With solemn mein and air sedate,
 When up the top of the golden stair,
 A shrouded figure ascended there,
 Applied for admission. He came and stood,
 Before St. Peter, so great and good,
 In hope the city of peace to win,
 And asked St Peter to let him in.

St. Peter said, with a gleam in his eye,
Who is tending the gate, Sir, you or I?
I have heard of you, and your gift of gab,
You are what is known on earth as a scab,
Thereupon he rose in his stature tall
And pressed a button upon a wall,
And said to the imp who answered the bell,
Escort this fellow around to L.

Tell Satan to give him a seat alone,
On a red hot griddle up near the throne;
But even the devil couldn't stand the smell
Of a cooking scab on a griddle in L.
It would cause revolt—a strike I know,
If I sent you down to the imps below,
Go back to your masters on earth and tell
Them that they don't even want a scab in L.

IV

Culture

by Right Bower

3 June, 1911

Strolling into the bar-parlour of an out-of-the-way pub, in the suburbs of a northern seaport, the writer found himself in the company of an assembly of more or less bibulous worthies, and the conversation was “Culture.” It seems they had all at once conceived this idea that they had a lot to learn, and a lot to tell, and at this particular moment were discussing the desirability of forming a debating club to that end. The person who seems to have started the idea was a broken-down schoolmaster, a very encyclopædia of knowledge, who would impart all sorts of information, from fishing to finance, if there was a prospective free drink around. And the cause of it all was a woman. The hotel, I may mention, was presided over by an attractive female, Mrs. Jellikins, petite, polite, and pretty, and withal on the safe side of forty. I was not long in seeing that she was the attraction that had brought the company of would-be Socrates together. Every time she brought an order into the bar-parlour she was the [cynosure] of all eyes. But old Pascoe the dominie, would always start some flowery dissertation on the earth's crust, or the fundamental principle that governs the laws of nations, and the young bloods felt that their senseless small talk was only injuring themselves in the widow's eyes, and would desist. For Mrs. Jellikins had over and over again ventured the

premise that Mr. Pascoe was such an intelligent gentleman, don't you know, and added such a distinctly *recherche* tone to the "Blue Anchor," that they all took it that he who would rule high in her graces would need to be a man of parts.

I shall, too, describe the company: First, then, there was Mr. Pascoe, as they called him to his face. They called him old Pascoe when he was absent. A lean, lanky man of about fifty, with the word *boozier* written large on his large nose. Then there was a marine engineer out of a ship, who could beat Pascoe on things foreign, but whose knowledge of those things seldom dealt on more than he had viewed around the docks of the ports he had touched at. A sprightly young shaver who came into the room soon after I discovered it, was about 22, and was what one might call dead nuts on the window. As I never heard his name, but always met him there in all weathers wearing leggings, "Leggings" I dubbed him. He rode a bicycle, and his conversation was mostly on bicycles. What he didn't know of them was not worth hearing. Then there was a local butcher who always undertook to be the last man out at closing-time, when he would reiterate Mrs. Jellikin's "Time, gents, please," in a manner as saying, "How would I do for a landlord?"

On this evening three worthies, with a few less assertive brethren, were discussing the best means of bringing out what was in them, as the dominie put it. The outshot of it was that they decided on a literary and debating club. The title in full was to be "The Blue Anchor Literary and Debating Society," and was toasted in mixed drinks at Mrs. Jellikin's expense. By the way, the how and why the inn got its title is interesting. When the widow's spouse was in the flesh, and some years before he and she met, he had earned his livelihood by fishing the adjacent river. Saving some few pounds, he sold out his gear and invested in the house that formerly occupied the tavern's site. But in selling his fishing-boats and tackle, he had overlooked an old rusty anchor that lay in an outbuilding, also a pot of blue paint. Applying the paint to the anchor, he had fixed it up in his garden as a souvenir of his earlier days. Becoming ambitious, he had had his place transformed into the tavern, and looking about for a title, his eyes fell on the anchor, and he looked no further. And to this day the old blue anchor hangs by a stout bracket over the door. However, to the club. The title settled on, the next item was the election of officers. Mr. Pascoe was declared by a show of hands President. Leggings elected himself Treasurer. Mr. Fat, the butcher, Secretary, and the others all enrolled as members.

A member desiring liquid refreshment at this moment rang the bell, which brought the widow into the room.

And here old Pascoe came on the scene again. In a polite word or two he begged Mrs. Jellikins to become an honorary member of the club. The very fact of having such an entertaining, gracious, and need I say, charming person on our books must, nay, cannot help but incite the members to put their whole efforts into the task of broadening their own and incidentally their fellow men's intellect through sojourning in the realms of thought and fancy, in the company of the leading lights of past and present times. "The Blue Anchor" shall be the centre from which shall radiate erudition and learning to all corners of the earth. Posterity

will revere, as it now does this humble attempt to raise the intellectual and moral status of the rising youth, and so on. The widow smiled and could only say thanks, but the wearer of the buckskins would have a speech.

"Really, gentlemen," began the embarrassed Mrs. Jellikins, "I can't, I can't, I can't find," and then Pascoe improved his position in the widow's graces, and sent a scowl over the face of the Leggings by rising to make on behalf of our charming hostess the necessary few remarks.

Speaking on behalf of Mrs. Jellikins, he could say (a smile from the widow) that the pleasure it gives her (another smile) to associate in such a laudable object (still smiling) with, ahem—and then the wretched reprobate who had ordered a drink, broke in with: "I say, missus, aint yer going to bring that bottle of stout in?" This was the widow's cue, and she took it and slipped out, whilst Pascoe, conscious of the fact that a grand opportunity to display his oratorical powers had been nipped in the bud, with some remark about some belly perishers not knowing when to use discretion, subsided into his seat.

Conversation soon became general again, and in the midst of a debate on the right spelling of the word ankylostomiasis (the miners' disease), I was drawn in. "This gentleman here," observed Mr. Pascoe, "is evidently able to give us some information on this point." I had to admit my ignorance. Pascoe was talking of betting on his spelling, I was to judge. A newspaper was brought containing the vexed word. Pascoe was right. We all imbibed, and after a few more words had been debated I retired to the street followed by Pascoe, who would persist in shaking hands. "I knew I was right," he said as we parted. "I sat up all night last night learning that word off by heart." Some weeks later I had occasion to pass "The Blue Anchor," and entered the bar-parlour. It was deserted, save for the presence of old Pascoe. Behind the bar sat Mrs. Jellikins.

"Well," I asked the dominie, "How is The Blue Anchor Literary and Debating Society getting on?"

"Defunct, sir, defunct, sir, decidedly non est, as the French would say."

"Dear me," I returned, "after such an auspicious opening I should have thought——"

"Don't mention it, sir, pray don't. It was beer them beggars wanted, not brains."

"I don't see any of them round here now," I vouchsafed.

He broke the silence with, "No, sir, and you won't," he replied. "You see, it's like this: Mrs. Jellikins is getting married next week to a chap old enough to be her father, and the company have all scuttled to their old haunts. An engaged woman is no attraction to young bloods, and they never did like the beer the widow sells."

"But yourself," I said, "Do you like it better than others?"

"I don't," he said, "but the slate will tell the story," and he pointed to a well-chalked slate that could be seen through the doorway, hanging behind the bar. He was about to recite to me his tale of a misspent life, but I pleaded previous engagements, and leaving him the price of a drink as I went through the bar, I tipped my hat to the smiling widow and left.

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